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Credits

Bungalow 14 from More Super Scary Stories for Sleep-
Overs #6 © 1995 by RCA Publishing Group, Inc.
Key To Strands: Front Cover-FC, Super Scary
Story-SSS, Our Haunted World-OHW, Strange But
True-SBT, Puzzles-PUZ, Classic Serial-CS, The
Unexplained-TU.

Photographs: Corbis UK TU1(tr); Mary Evans Picture
Library Ltd SBT2(t); The Ronald Grant Archives
TU1(b); Maureen Gavin SBT1(b), SBT2(b); The London
Dungeons SBT1(t); Planet Earth Pictures/Seaphot Ltd
(Krafft) TU2(b); Popperfoto TU1(t), TU2(t); Rex
Features Ltd TU2(tr); Topham Picturepoint OHW2(t).

Illustrations: Simoni Boni CS1-4(sp); Lee Gibbons
OHW1(tr), TU1-2(sp); John Higgins SBT1-2(sp); Paul
Johnson FC(b), SSS1-7, OHW1(bl), OHW2(c); David
Millgate FC(t); Jerry Paris CS1(t), PUZ1-3(sp); Lee
Sullivan OHW3-4(sp); David Wyatt (Sarah Brown
Agency) OHW1(cl).

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Printed by: CSM Impact, England

Colour origination by: Colourscan, Singapore

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BUNGALOW 14



he sign at the edge of the highway read NO FACILITIES
NEXT 100 MILES.

"There's a petrol station just up ahead," Stephen's
dad pointed out. "We'd better stop and fill up." He
turned the family car off the road and parked next to
a pump in the shade of the station overhang.

Stephen's mum turned in her seat to face him and his older
sister, Liz. "I'm going to use the washrooms, and I think you two
had better do the same. It looks like we won't find a motel until
we get closer to Albuquerque."

"Great," Liz grumbled. "Just what I wanted to hear – I get to
spend another two hours cooped up in the back seat with my
darling brother."

"Well excuse me for living, your highness," Stephen replied.

"Please!" their mum pleaded. "None of us wants to spend
any more time on the road than we have to, so let's just make
the best of it." She slid out of her seat and slammed her door.

"Well done," Liz complained, frowning at her brother as she
got out of the car.

"Me?" he protested. "You started it. Why do I get blamed
for everything?"



Stephen scooped out some change from his pockets and bought a cold drink from the machine on the forecourt. He looked out on the endless expanse of desert beyond and at the far-off mountains ahead, wondering what sort of secrets they might hold. The landscape in between was a mass of pale sand, dotted with dried brush. A black ribbon of highway sliced through it.

He felt the sun-baked ground sizzle beneath the soles of his trainers. Kicking a pebble into the parched brush a few steps away, he froze. From within the shade of the brush came a dry, rattling sound, followed by a swift movement. Stephen recognised the long, slender body of a rattlesnake. The startled creature drew itself back in a tight S-shaped curve with its triangular-shaped head lifted in defence above the sand.



Stephen knew that the head was shaped to accommodate deadly venom glands. He also knew not to do anything that would alarm the animal more than he already had. Rigid with fear, his head pounding, Stephen waited until the rattlesnake silently withdrew.

"Whoa," he gasped, and retreated to the safety of the car. "Dad!" he yelled. "You won't believe this!"

His father was talking to the petrol

attendant and held up one hand to quiet his son. With a sigh, Stephen climbed back into the car. His sister was reading a magazine. "Liz," he said excitedly, "I just saw a rattlesnake! It was only a few steps away."

"Good thing it didn't bite you," she said with a nasty grin. "It might have got ill."

Stephen scowled. "Yeah? Well, I scared it away by showing it a picture of you."

"That's enough, you two," Stephen's dad ordered as he got back into the driver's seat. "The attendant told me that there's a small motel just off the main road not far from here. It isn't fancy, but he said they always have vacancies. Why don't we stop there for the night and get some rest? It might improve everybody's mood."

"That's a great idea," Stephen's mum said with a smile. "As long as the room has a shower and a bed, it's fancy enough for me."



The turn-off wasn't far, and a few minutes later they pulled into a dusty car park. A sun-bleached red pick-up truck was parked in front of one of the rooms. The motel was made up of three single-storey buildings painted the same lifeless colour as the surrounding sand. The units were arranged around a central court with a swimming pool that was empty, apart from some overgrown weeds.

"The attendant wasn't joking," Stephen's mum commented. "But it's better than nothing. Let's go and see about getting some rooms."

The door to the small motel office was open, but there was no one at the desk. "Anybody here?" Stephen's dad called out. Then, noticing a bell on the counter, he tapped it several times.

A door opened from the back of the room and a tall, slim man in jeans, a faded denim shirt, and a cowboy hat stepped inside. Stephen noticed that his well-worn boots appeared to be made of snakeskin, but it was what the man wore around his neck that really drew his attention. Hanging from a short strip of leather was the skull of a rattlesnake with its ivory white fangs exposed as if ready to strike.

"What do you want?" the man asked in an unfriendly tone.

"A couple of rooms," Stephen's dad answered. "Just for tonight."

"I don't think I have anything right now," the man stated flatly.

Stephen's dad looked surprised. He pointed to a board behind the desk that contained fourteen hooks. A key hung from each of them except the last two. "But there are still empty rooms."

The surly man folded his arms and leaned across the registration desk. "We're doing some... renovations," he replied. "Most of the rooms are unavailable. You're better off driving into Albuquerque."

"Look," Stephen's dad said firmly. "My family is very tired. I don't know what the problem is, but we're willing to take just about anything. Can't we at least see the rooms?"

"Of course you can," someone said from behind them. Stephen turned to

see a tall woman standing in the doorway. He couldn't help but stare at her strange, yellowish eyes. They were almost hypnotic. "Sam," she said in a scolding manner. "Don't be so unfriendly. Bungalows five and six are freshly made up. I'm sure they will be fine in there."

The man became nervous... frightened even. "I think... we have enough guests for tonight," he said.

"Sam!" the woman protested, her eyes glittering. "Fortune has provided us with more. We really must get them settled before dark."

Stephen thought he saw the skull that hung around the man's neck move slightly. Sam's eyes appeared to glaze over momentarily as he handed over two keys. "Suit yourselves," he grumbled.



Stephen and his sister headed to their room. "That guy is really weird," Stephen declared. "Shall we go and check this place out while it's still light enough?"

"No thanks," Liz answered as she flopped on to one of the twin beds. "You can be Mr Explorer if you want. I'm too tired."

"You're such a drag," Stephen griped, heading for the door. "Tell Mum and Dad I'll be back in a few minutes." Once outside, he examined the empty pool and

car park and began to explore a shallow ditch near the road. From where he was standing, he had a clear view of the entire motel. He watched as the strange woman he had met earlier left the office and strode purposefully towards the last bungalow. The sun was just beginning to set behind the mountains, streaking the sky with red and orange, but even in the failing light he could make out two or three slender, sinuous shadows on the ground that seemed to be keeping pace with her.

"Are those snakes?" he asked aloud. 'Nah, even pet snakes don't follow people around,' he thought. 'It must be a trick of the light.'

The woman looked up towards the darkening sky with an odd smile that even from a distance gave Stephen an uncomfortable feeling. Then she hurriedly entered the bungalow.

Stephen trotted back towards the building, then prowled along the cracked concrete path that ran alongside the motel, stopping to peek into the front window of each room.

"They don't look like they're being renovated to me," he muttered. In bungalow 13 he saw an older man stretched out across one of the beds. He appeared to be asleep. A half-empty whisky bottle stood on the bedside table.

The last room was bungalow 14. Its curtains were pulled tightly across the unlit window,

unlike those in the other rooms. This kindled Stephen's curiosity, so he crept up to the door and tried the knob, but it was locked. He put his ear to the door.

At first everything seemed quiet, but as the last rays of the sun disappeared, he thought he heard something stir inside. There was a slight rattling noise that sent a chill down his spine. Suddenly a door slammed at the motel office. Stephen scurried back to his room.



Now what?" Liz complained as Stephen raced in, locked the door, closed the curtains, and peeked out like a fugitive. "What have you done now?"

"Shhhh!" Stephen hissed. "I'll tell you in a minute." Still breathing hard, he watched as the thin man from the front desk, Sam, entered bungalow 13. He came out again, holding up the elderly man Stephen had seen there earlier. Together they shuffled over towards bungalow 14. Then Sam opened the door, and guided the old man inside.

After a few minutes Sam came back out of the room alone. He stopped, leaned against the wall, and put his face in his hands. Then he walked slowly back to the office. Seconds later the orange neon vacancy sign flared to life.



Stephen turned to his sister. "There's something *very* strange going on," he said.

"You're strange," Liz said sleepily. "Turn out the light. I'm exhausted."

Stephen sat in darkness for a while, watching over bungalow 14 and then drifted into a restless sleep.



In his dream, Stephen found himself alone at night, in the middle of the desert. He called for his parents, but the only answer was the plaintive cry of a coyote. Then he began to hear other sounds... sounds usually beyond the human senses. He heard the soft footsteps of desert mice scurrying in the brush, the smooth clicking noise of a scorpion preparing to strike, and the slithering of snakes crawling across the warm sand, searching for prey. The snakes seemed to be everywhere.

Frightened, Stephen ran up a sand dune, but kept slipping down, unable to reach the top. Then he noticed a reddish glow coming from behind, and turned round to see a huge bonfire. Dozens of people appeared, dancing around and leaping across the flames. They were dressed in flowing robes that looked as if they were made from folds of snakeskin. The skulls of rattlesnakes, just like the one Sam wore, hung from cords around their necks.

And there was something else, too. In his dream state, Stephen could sense an immense shadow of a long, slender body drawn back in a tight S-shaped curve hovering over him. He could feel the

steady, hypnotic gaze of its horribly familiar yellowish eyes. It was something dreadful and powerful, something secret, and older than the ancient desert itself. Then, in the flickering firelight, he saw his mother and father, surrounded by rattlesnakes.

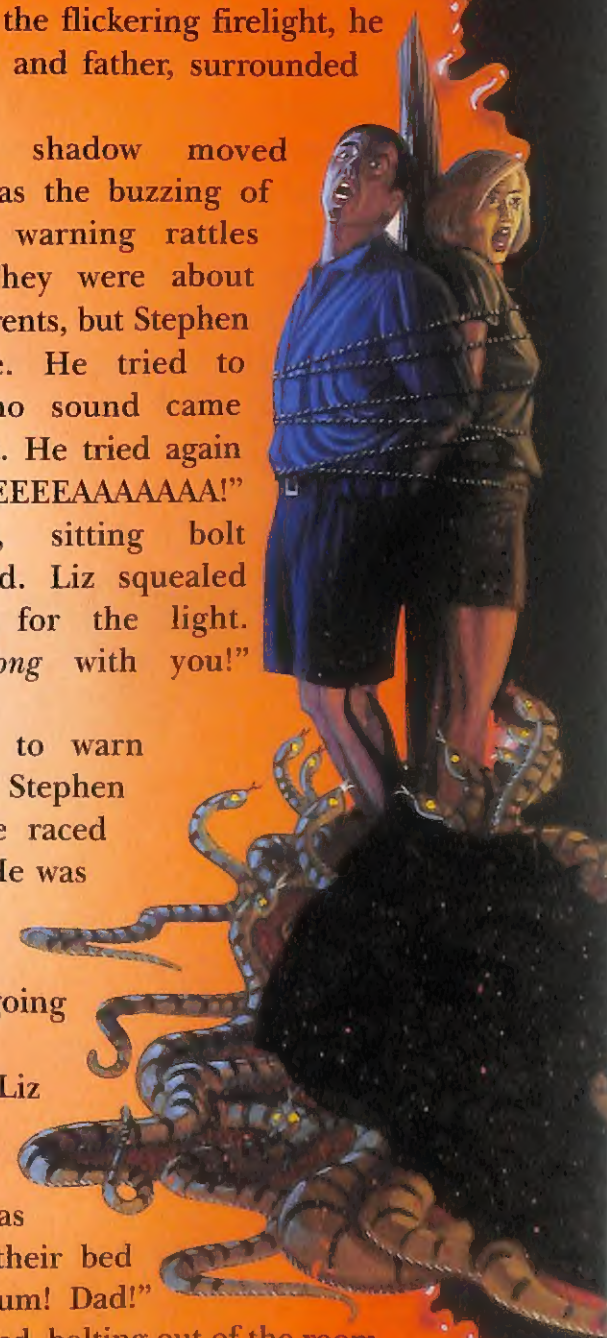
The huge shadow moved towards them as the buzzing of the serpents' warning rattles got louder. They were about to strike his parents, but Stephen couldn't move. He tried to scream, but no sound came from his throat. He tried again and - "YYYYEEEEEEEEAAAAA!" he screamed, sitting bolt upright in bed. Liz squealed and fumbled for the light. "What is *wrong* with you!" she yelled.

"We've got to warn Mum and Dad!" Stephen shrieked, as he raced for the door. He was so sure that his terrifying nightmare was going to come true.

Stephen and Liz ran to their parents' room, but the door was unlocked and their bed was empty. "Mum! Dad!" Stephen screamed, bolting out of the room to see if his parents were in the car just outside. The car was empty.

They ran barefoot across the courtyard to the office but that was deserted too.

"Look!" Stephen said, pointing to bungalow 14. The open door was lit up



by the eerie glow of the vacancy sign. Slowly, he walked towards it with Liz on his heels. Somewhere in the back of his frantic mind, he had registered the fact that the ground was covered with dozens of snake-like tracks leading towards the bungalow. He stopped at the threshold and reached in to snap on the light. Nothing happened.

"Mum? Dad?" Stephen called softly as they moved cautiously across the floor into the darkened room.

Stephen touched something with his foot, but in the darkness he couldn't tell what it was. "Open the curtains," he whispered to Liz.

He heard her fumbling with the cords. Suddenly the curtains swept open and the centre of the room was filled with a dull orange light. Stephen's heart pounded rapidly. At his feet he recognised the lifeless body of the old man from bungalow 13. Two others lay nearby in the shadows. He didn't need to look to know they were his parents.

Terrified, Stephen glanced at his sister. Her face was frozen in horror. "This isn't real," she cried. "It's just a terrible nightmare. I'm going to wake up and be home in bed."

"We've got to get out of here!" Stephen cried, lunging towards her.

"I think not," a deep voice hissed from a shrouded corner of the room. Stephen backed closer to his sister as a huge creature slithered into the unearthly light, blocking their escape.

Instantly, Stephen knew it was the strange figure from his dream.

"W-what is it?" Liz stuttered, paralysed with fear.



The being had the body of an immense exotic snake, but there was something slightly human about the scaly face, something very familiar about its yellowish eyes.

"Now that you are here," it hissed, "I *insissssst* that you stay. I am in command of powers you cannot comprehend. Powers that were ancient when this desert was still young. But I *need* your life force. My survival depends on it."

Stephen took a step to one side, and the creature struck at him, its long fangs bared. It reared back and struck again, only just missing him. All at once a dark figure appeared in the open doorway. It was Sam.

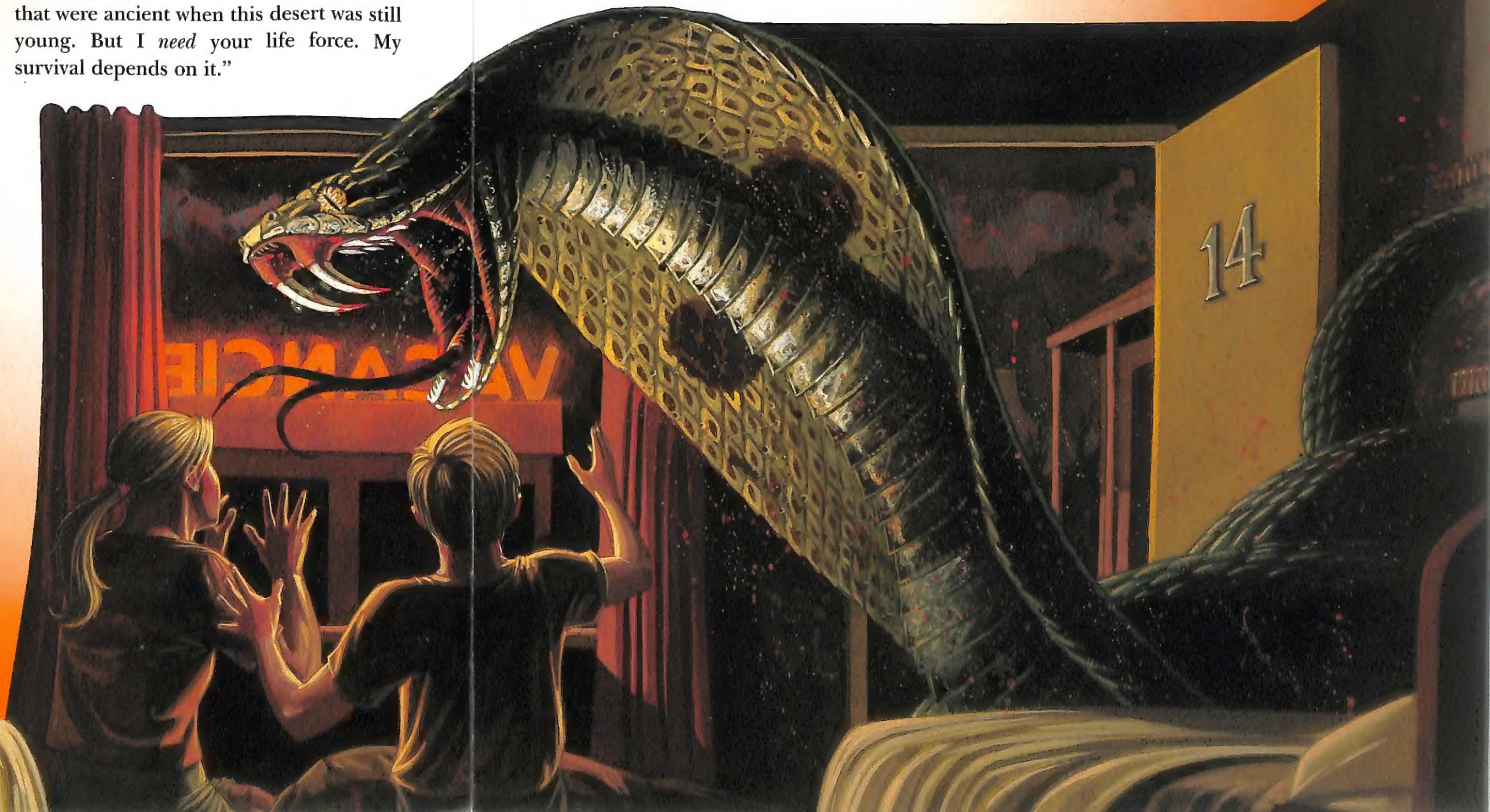
"Do something!" Stephen shouted to the man. "Help us!"

"That weak-minded fool cannot help you," the creature whispered viciously. "He will do as he is commanded."

"I told you to leave," Sam answered sadly as he turned away. "You had your chance, but..." His voice trailed off as he walked outside, closing and locking the door, forever sealing in the sounds of their screams.

By the time Sam reached the office, the cries had stopped. He leaned wearily against the wall and looked out at the first signs of the coming dawn. A dusty car turned off the road and rolled into the motel car park. While his family slept, a tired-looking traveller stepped from the vehicle and walked towards the office, the vacancy sign gleaming in the early morning gloom.

THE END



OUR HAUNTED WORLD

Even in today's ultra hi-tech Japan, ghosts and the supernatural are accepted as part of modern life...



A FISHY TALE

From all over Japan there have been stories of fish with human faces. One is reported to live in the pond in the temple gardens of Yamagata. It is said that as the fish swims towards the edge of the pond, visitors are spooked to see that its face is far from fishlike! (It's probably a little like the computer-enhanced fish pictured here.) No one knows how or why this fish's face appears to be human, but local people don't seem at all surprised that their mystical garden should have such a strange creature living in its pond!



TEA AND TRICKS

In Nagasaki, the Café Andersen is run by Hisamura Toshihide, who holds daily demonstrations of his psychokinetic skills. He places a customer's cigarette on his palm, where he makes it levitate and jump around. Hisamura can stop watches, or set them to any time without touching them. Another popular feat is where a customer secretly draws a picture which Hisamura perfectly reproduces without ever seeing it. There's always a big queue to see his displays of 28 different feats!

PORTRAIT OF AN ALIEN?

The town of Aomori has many mysteries, including a pyramid which is older than those in Egypt! Some say that aliens visited in ancient times, and point to a strange statue, the Shakōki Dogu (right) as evidence of this. Dug up by a farmer, the statue is wearing big goggles and a costume like a spacesuit. Dating from



the Neolithic period (up to 8000BC), its outfit is unlike the simple clothes worn in those days. Could the statue – now in the Tokyo National Museum – have been created to capture the likeness and memory of visiting aliens?

SPECTRAL SAMURAI

In 939BC, a samurai called Taira no Masakado wanted to set up an independent state. He named Sashima as Japan's new capital city, and himself the 'New Emperor'. Soon after, he was killed by an arrow. His head was displayed to put off any would-be rebels. But instead of rotting, the head grew more lifelike and fierce looking! Three months later, it began to glow, then flew off towards Masakado's home! A monk brought down the head with an arrow and it was buried at Kanda Myojin shrine.

A decade later, the grave began to glow and tremble and villagers were often terrified by Masakado's ghost. Only after special prayers was the ghost temporarily laid to rest. Since then, whenever the head has been disturbed, bad luck follows – unexplained deaths, illness, and fires. To this day, prayers are offered to Masakado, who is still greatly feared by Tokyo businessmen working near the shrine in Otemachi.

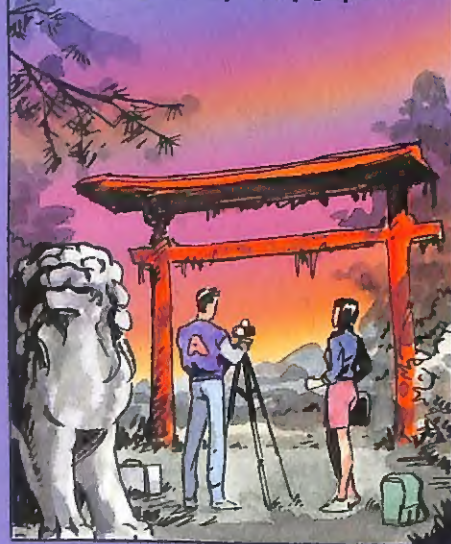
Two Worlds Meet

Mount Osore, on the Shimokita Peninsula, is a sacred mountain with a large crater at its summit. It is believed to be the place where the living can communicate with their dead loved ones. Locals describe someone who has died as having 'gone to the mountain'. Festivals are held there twice a year, where local shamans – people who are believed to be in contact with the spirit world – pass messages to and from the ghosts which are thought to gather on the barren slopes of Mount Osore.

A WHIFFY TALE!

A friend of a friend heard this story in Tokyo...

1 A young photographer and his wife were visiting Tokyo, taking photos for a book called 'Spooky Japan'.



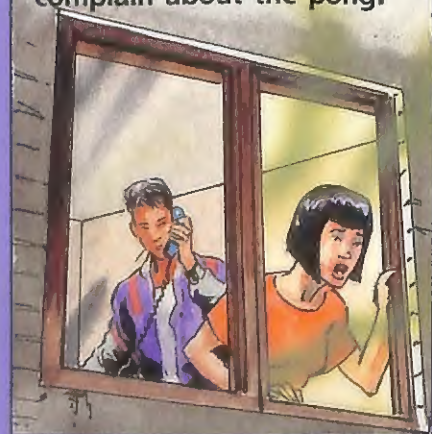
2 Trying to eke out their limited money, they checked into the cheapest hotel they could find.



3 As they unpacked their bags, the girl said, "There's a really foul smell in here. Can you smell it?"



4 The guy certainly could! He opened the window, then rang reception to complain about the pong.



5 "Come on, let's go out while they sort it out!" he said to his wife.



6 Meanwhile, a cleaner sprayed a whole can of air freshener round the door of the room and left it at that.



7 That night, when the couple returned, the dreadful, putrid smell in their room was even worse!



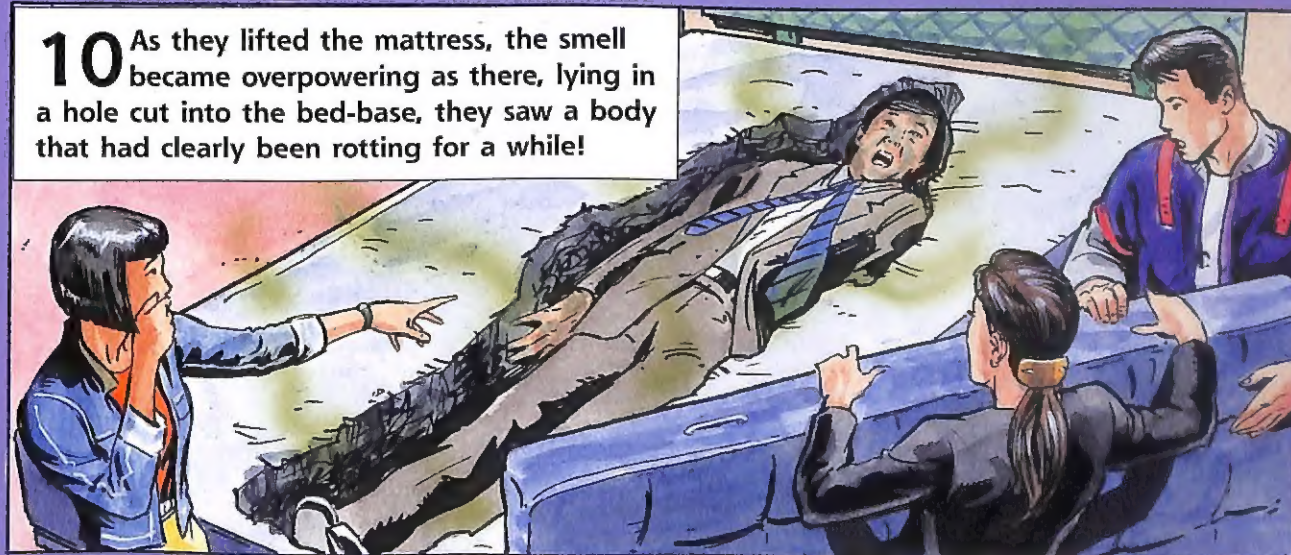
8 The guy rang the manager – but he was unavailable. The receptionist came to their room instead.



9 Nearly gagging at the pong, the woman pointed to the bed and said, "It seems to be coming from over there!"



10 As they lifted the mattress, the smell became overpowering as there, lying in a hole cut into the bed-base, they saw a body that had clearly been rotting for a while!



11 "It's the manager!" cried the receptionist. "He went missing three days ago!" For once, the photographer didn't reach for his camera.



PS

Later the police told the couple that the hotel manager had been a secret gambler and had fallen foul of the local gangsters and loan sharks!



JACK THE RIPPER



September 2, 1888
MEDICAL MURDERER?
Police are trying to work out who was responsible for the recent murder in Whitechapel. But the evil fiend left few clues.

By examining the body, detectives have discovered that the culprit was left-handed. They also believe that he may have been a doctor, as his foul 'surgery' was carried out with skill.

Another theory is that the crime was the work of a man possessed by the spirit of a 16th-century monk. The monk killed a woman in Mitre Square, near the recent murder scene. Then he committed suicide.

Whoever the killer may be, locals are taking no chances. Every night, teams of men patrol the area, looking for him.

Special Investigation File: 35

Subject: a murderer who mutilated his victims

Place: East London

SpineChiller creates a file

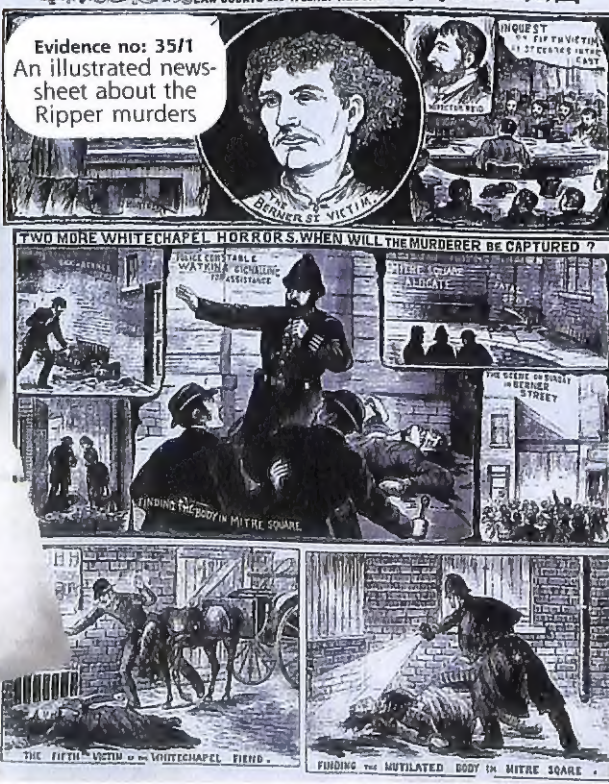
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In late summer 1888, a deadly reign of terror began in London's East End. On August 31 that year, a multiple murderer struck for the first time in Whitechapel. The victim was prostitute Mary Ann Nicholls. The villain became known as Jack the Ripper, because he had brutally ripped open Mary Ann's body.

Four more prostitutes died at Jack's hands - Annie Chapman on September 8, Elizabeth Stride and Catherine Eddowes in the 'double event' of September 30, and Mary Jane Kelly on November 9. The corpses of all four were disembowelled, as Mary Ann's had been. Details of the killer's grisly deeds quickly spread around the world. But uncovering his identity has proved to be a much slower process.

POLICE NEWS

Evidence no: 35/1
An illustrated news-sheet about the Ripper murders



SUSPECT SUMMARY

Following is the list I have compiled of the main people who are suspected of the Ripper murders.

1 Black magician Aleister Crowley has pointed the finger at 'Roslyn D'Onston'. Police believe Crowley means former medical student Robert Donston Stephenson. He is a shady character, but probably not the Ripper.

2 Painter Walter Sickert has accused Queen Victoria's doctor, Sir William Gull. He claims Gull was hired by the royal family to silence the women because they knew all about the love life of the Duke of Clarence, the queen's grandson. Police think that this story is ridiculous.

3 Some think the Duke of Clarence, Prince Albert Victor, is himself guilty and that the royal family is covering up his crimes. Investigators do not think this is credible.

4 Other people have tried to put a woman in the frame. They claim that a mad midwife, 'Jill the Ripper', is responsible. But nobody has been able to name her.

5 Other candidates include a member of a Russian religious sect, a Jewish butcher and a Puritan who wants to punish London's prostitutes. There is no real evidence for any of these theories.



Evidence no: 35/2
The Duke of Clarence

1972

Dear Oliver

I've just read 'Jack the Ripper', a new book by Daniel Farson. He claims Sir Melville Macnaghten, who worked on the case, knows 'Jack's' identity. The former CID boss thinks he was lawyer Montague John Drutt.

Farson has discovered that Drutt's mother was mad and the lawyer's own behaviour very strange. He also points out that Drutt had access to medical equipment, as his cousin was a Whitechapel doctor. Even more suspiciously, Drutt drowned himself in the River Thames shortly after the last Ripper killing.

The case seems convincing, doesn't it?

Yours

Henry

CONCLUSION

It will probably never be possible to prove who Jack the Ripper really was. But the prime suspect is certainly London lawyer Montague John Drutt.

Unexplained



Chapter 2

The Middle Toe of the Right Foot

Retold from a story by Ambrose Bierce

The events that had led up to this "duel in the dark" were simple enough. One evening three young men of the town of Marshall were sitting in a quiet corner of the porch of the village hotel. They were smoking and discussing such matters as three educated young men of a Southern village would naturally find interesting. The men's names were King, Sancher and Rosser.

At a little distance, within easy hearing but taking no part in the conversation, sat a fourth man. He was a stranger to the others. They merely knew that on his arrival by the stagecoach that afternoon he had written in the hotel register the name of Robert Grossmith. No one had seen him speak to anyone except the hotel clerk. He seemed to have no desire to do so, and to be singularly fond of his own company.

"I hate any kind of deformity in a woman," said King, "whether natural or acquired. I have a theory that any physical defect has a mental and moral defect of character to match."

"So," Rosser said gravely, "a lady lacking the moral advantage of a nose would find the struggle to become Mrs King an arduous enterprise."

"Of course you may put it that way," was the reply. "But, seriously, I once threw over a most charming young girl on learning quite by

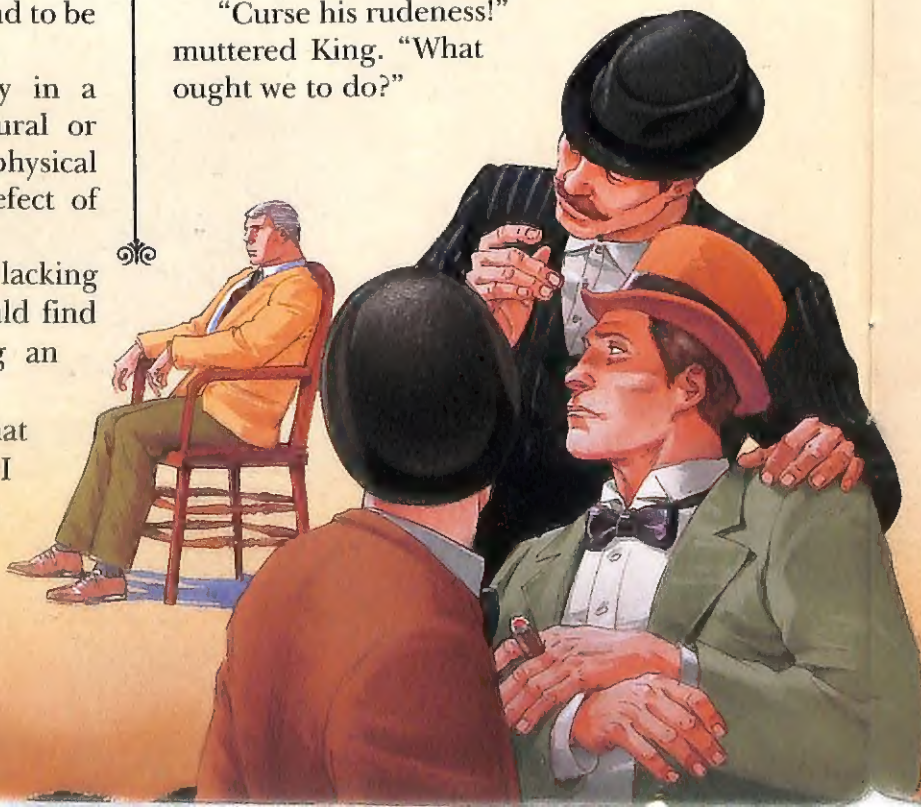
accident that she had suffered amputation of a toe. My conduct was brutal if you like, but if I had married that girl I should have been miserable for the rest of my life and should have made her miserable, too."

"Whereas," said Sancher, with a light laugh, "by marrying a gentleman of rather more tolerant views she escaped with just a cut to the throat."

"Ah, you know to whom I refer. Yes, she married Manton, but I don't know about his tolerance. Perhaps he cut her throat because he discovered that she lacked that excellent thing in woman, the middle toe of the right foot."

"Look at that chap!" said Rosser in a low voice, his eyes fixed upon the stranger, who was obviously listening to the conversation.

"Curse his rudeness!" muttered King. "What ought we to do?"



"That's an easy one," Rosser replied. "Sir," he continued, addressing himself to the stranger, "I think it would be better if you removed your chair to the other end of the veranda. The presence of gentlemen is evidently an unfamiliar situation to you."

The man sprang to his feet and strode forward with clenched hands, his face white with rage. All were now standing. Sancher stepped between the two men, who seemed about to fight.

"You are hasty and unjust," he said to Rosser, "this gentleman has done nothing to deserve such language."

But Rosser refused to withdraw even a word. By the custom of both the country and the time there could be only one outcome to such a quarrel – a duel.

"I demand the satisfaction due to a gentleman," said the stranger, who had become more calm. "I have no acquaintances in this region. Perhaps you, sir," bowing to Sancher, "will be kind enough to act as my second."

Sancher accepted the trust – somewhat reluctantly it must be confessed, for the man's appearance and manner were not at all to his liking. King, who during the conversation had hardly removed his eyes from the stranger's face and had not spoken a word, consented with a nod to be Rosser's second. A meeting was arranged for the following evening. The nature of these arrangements has already been explained. The duel with knives in a dark room was once a commoner feature of Southern life than it is likely to be again.

In the blaze of a midsummer noonday, the old Manton house was hardly true to its grim reputation. The sunshine appeared to caress its walls warmly and affectionately. The grass greening the area

in front of it seemed to grow with a natural and joyous exuberance, and the weeds blossomed quite like plants.

However, the bleak, lifeless trees on either side stood as a silent reminder of the misery and evil that the house had seen. The glassless upper windows also spoke of past neglect and sorrow. Even the heat



shimmering over the stony fields round about could not completely dispel the gloomy atmosphere that hung over the scene.

This was how the house appeared to Sheriff Adams and two other men who had come out from Marshall to look at it. One of these men was Mr King, the sheriff's deputy. The other man, whose name was Brewster, was a brother of the late Mrs Manton. Under a state law relating to property abandoned for a certain period by an untraceable owner, the sheriff was legal custodian of the Manton farm. His visit was the result of a court order by which Mr Brewster was to get possession of the property as heir to his dead sister.

By a coincidence, the visit was made on the day after the night that Deputy King had unlocked the house for another and very different purpose. His presence now was not of his own choosing. He had been ordered to accompany his superior and at

the moment could think of nothing more prudent than to obey.

Carelessly opening the front door, which to his surprise was not locked, the sheriff was amazed to see, lying on the floor of the passage into which it opened, a confused heap of men's clothing. Examination showed it to consist of two hats, and the same number of coats, waistcoats and scarves. All were in a remarkably good state of preservation, although made somewhat dirty by the dust in which they lay. Mr Brewster was equally astonished.

With a new and lively interest, the sheriff now unlatched and pushed open a door on the right and the three entered. The room was apparently vacant. But as their eyes grew used to the dimmer light, something became visible in the farthest angle of the wall. It was a human figure – that of a man crouching in the corner.

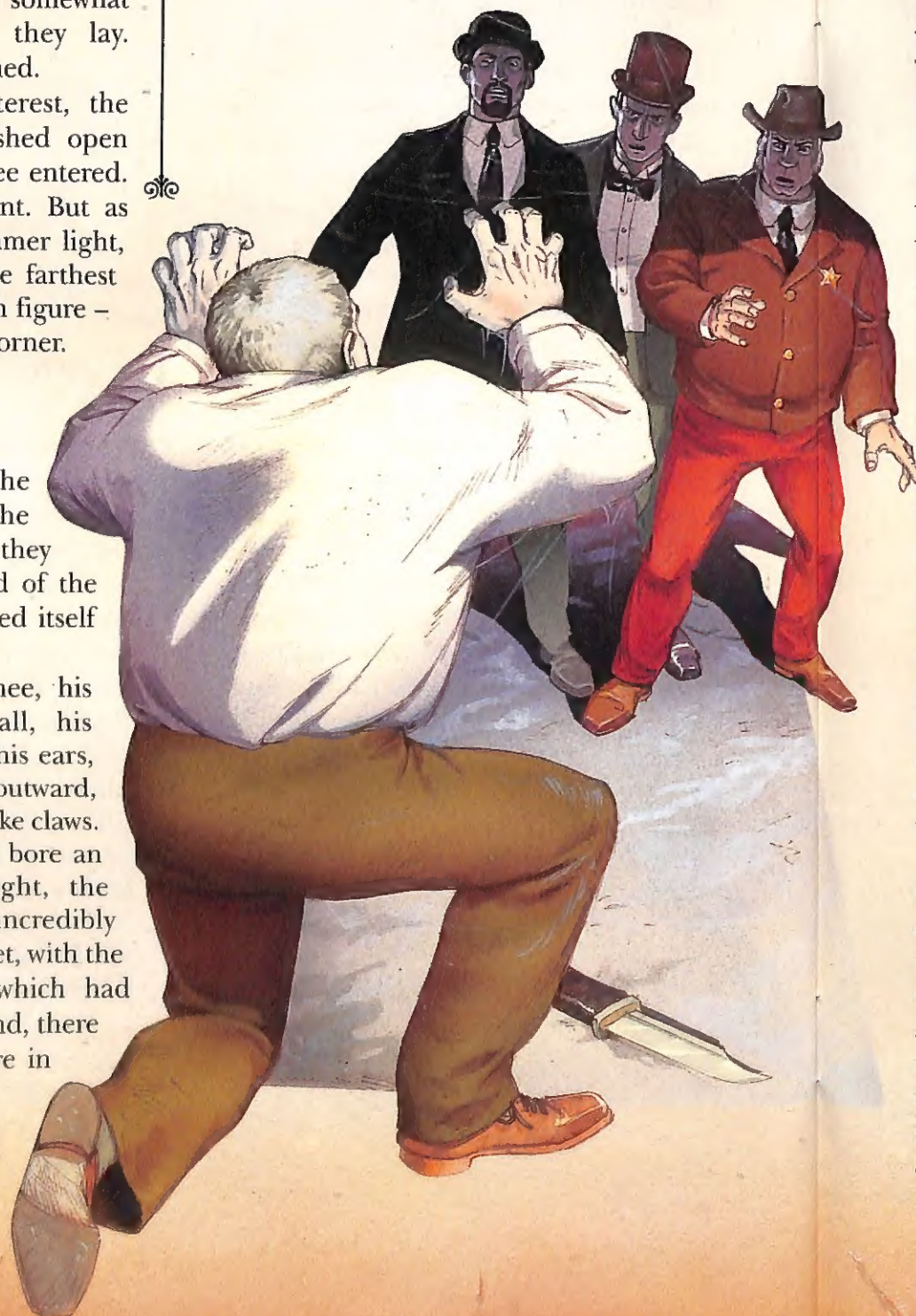
Something strange in the figure's attitude made the three intruders halt when they had barely passed the threshold of the room. Gradually its shape defined itself more and more clearly.

The man was upon one knee, his back in the angle of the wall, his shoulders raised to the level of his ears, his hands before his face, palms outward, the fingers spread and crooked like claws. The white face, turned upward, bore an expression of unutterable fright, the mouth half open, the eyes incredibly expanded. He was stone dead. Yet, with the exception of a bowie knife, which had evidently fallen from his own hand, there was not another object anywhere in the room.

In the thick dust that covered the floor there were some confused footprints near the

door and along the wall through which it opened. Along one of the adjoining walls, too, past the boarded up windows, was the trail made by the man himself in slowly reaching his corner. In approaching the corpse, the three men followed that trail.

The sheriff grasped one of the out-thrown arms. It was as rigid as iron, and the



application of a gentle force rocked the entire body. Brewster gazed into the distorted face. "God of mercy!" he suddenly cried, "It is Manton!"

"You are quite right," said King, with an evident attempt at calmness. "I knew Manton. He then wore a full beard and his hair long, but this is definitely he."

He might have added, "I recognised him when he challenged Rosser. I told Rosser and Sancher who he was before we played this horrible trick on him. Then Rosser left this dark room at our heels, forgetting his outer clothing in the excitement, and driving away with us in his shirt sleeves. All through the proceedings we knew whom we were dealing with. We were paying him back for his evil crimes, murderer and coward that he was!"

But nothing of this awful story did Mr King tell. Now he was trying to penetrate the mystery of Manton's death. It was obvious that he had not once moved from the corner where he had been stationed. His posture was that of neither attack nor defence. He had dropped his weapon and obviously perished from sheer horror as a result of something that he had seen. All these were extraordinary circumstances that Mr King's disturbed intelligence could not rightly understand.

Groping for a clue in this maze of doubt, King's gaze moved slowly and mechanically downward. It fell upon something which, there, in the full light of day and in the presence of two living companions, affected him with terror. In the dust of years that lay thick upon the floor, leading from the door by which they had entered, straight across the room to within just a yard of Manton's stiff, crouching corpse, were three parallel lines of footprints.

The two outer sets of these light but definite impressions of bare feet were those of small children, the inner set a woman's. From the point at which they ended they did not return – they pointed all one way. Brewster, who had observed them at exactly the same moment, was leaning forward in an attitude of rapt attention, horribly pale.

"Look at that!" he cried, pointing with both hands at the nearest print of the woman's right foot, where she appeared to have stopped and stood. "The middle toe is missing – it was Gertrude!"

Gertrude was the late Mrs Manton, sister to Mr Brewster.

THE END



WORD POWER

Southern – of the Southern states of the USA, for example Texas and Arizona

arduous – very difficult

exuberance – vigour; vitality

custodian – a person in charge of looking after something they do not own; keeper

prudent – sensible; wise

distorted – twisted out of its normal shape

rapt – totally absorbed; engrossed

NEXT ISSUE:

The Open Door by Charlotte Riddell



JINXES

Ever heard someone being described as 'jinxed'? If you have, it means that he or she is unlucky. A car or ship involved in a number of accidents may get a reputation for being jinxed, too. And even films, numbers and paintings have been thought to bring bad luck. Could these cases just be unfortunate coincidences? Read on for some seriously bad luck stories!

PRESIDENTIAL CURSE

Until 1989, if an American president was elected in a year that could be divided by 20, he was fated to die in office.

The jinx started with President William Harrison, who was elected in 1840 and died of pneumonia. Abraham Lincoln (elected in 1860), James Garfield (elected in 1880), William McKinley (elected for the second time in 1900) and John Kennedy (elected in 1960) were all assassinated. President Harding (elected in 1920) had a fatal heart attack and FD Roosevelt (elected for the third time in 1940) died of polio.

Despite an attempted assassination in 1981, President Ronald Reagan (elected in 1980) ended his term alive! He must have ended the jinx too.



▲ **UNLUCKY OFFICE**
Assassinated president JFK – victim of a jinx rather than a conspiracy?



▲ **AN ILL OMEN?**
More bad luck for 'The Omen' star, Gregory Peck? This attack was part of the script, but the film seemed to attract trouble.



▲ **COOKING UP TROUBLE**
Typhoid Mary was a cook in New York in 1906 who seemed to spread typhoid wherever she prepared a meal. Strangely, she didn't have the disease herself.

FRIGHTFUL FILM

Not surprisingly, some films about the supernatural seem to be plagued by bad luck. This is what happened to people on the set of 'The Omen'. A plane carrying the star Gregory Peck and another carrying the author David Seltzer and Robert Munger, who devised the film, were both struck by lightning. The director Richard Donner was hit by a car. Special effects man John Richardson had an accident with his car and his passenger died. And the zoo keeper was killed by a tiger the day that the film crew left the zoo. Could these accidents be more than just coincidence?



◀ **BEATING THE BAD LUCK**
After this diesel engine was involved in accidents and robbery, British Rail gave in to superstition and changed its number.

DAMNED DIESEL

In 1960, British Rail built the 100-tonne diesel locomotive D326. Two years later, while hauling an express, it ploughed into some cars, killing 18 people. On August 8, 1963, D326 was pulling the mail train when it was hijacked. The driver was badly injured and the gang stole £2.6 million in what came to be known as the 'Great Train Robbery'. Finally British Rail changed the diesel's number to 40126, and the jinx vanished.

TOURIST TRAP

In 1977, the Loffert family returned home to Buffalo, USA, with stones they had collected from the Mauna Loa volcano in Hawaii, against local advice. Within a few months, illness had struck the whole family – Dan had an eye infection, Tod got appendicitis and Mark broke his arm. In desperation, the Lofferts sent the stones back, yet the accidents continued until Mark owned up to keeping some. When these were returned the bad luck stopped.

Other people reported similar bad luck after coming home from Hawaii with volcanic stones. Newspapers reported these stories, and told of a Hawaiian legend that claims that taking the stones angers the volcano goddess, Pele. As a result, hundreds of stones were sent back to the Volcanoes National Park in Hawaii by frightened tourists.



▲ **CRY IF YOU WANT TO**
Owners of 'The Crying Boy' paintings decided they would rather burn their pictures than attract bad luck.

JINX OR JOKE?

The British tabloid newspaper 'The Sun' published an article in 1985 reporting that 'The Crying Boy', Britain's best-selling painting at the time, was jinxed. Wherever the painting hung, homes had been damaged by inexplicable fires – while the paintings remained unharmed.

The power of suggestion can work wonders! Readers sent in bad luck stories that they blamed on the painting – they also sent their copies of 'The Crying Boy'. On Hallowe'en that year, The Sun held an enormous bonfire of the paintings – a few firemen would not attend because they thought it might bring bad luck!



▲ **STONE ME!**
A scientist risks the anger of the goddess Pele by collecting unlucky stones at Mauna Loa volcano.

GHOST TOWN PUZZLES

STRANGE SIGNS

Can you unscramble the letters on the ghost town's building signs to read what they say?

WRAHARED

TKNREAUERD

LOANSO
THE
LAST FRONTIER

NEELRAG ROTES

THEOL

DANGEROUS DESPERADOES

The famous names on these WANTED posters have been muddled up. Can you sort them out?

JESSE
THE KID

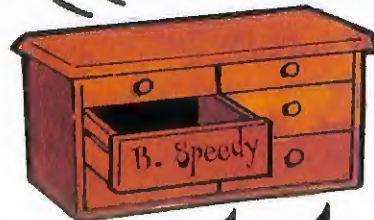
BUTCH
HARDIN

BILLY
JAMES

JOHN
WESLEY
CASSIDY

WILD WEST WORDS

Work out five well-known Western words, objects or phrases from these clues?



FASCINATING FACTS

Boot Hill, the cowboys' name for the cemetery at Dodge City and other such Wild West towns, was so called because only-too-many of its occupants were buried with their boots on!

LOANSO
THE
LAST FRONTIER

NEELRAG ROTES

THEOL

FOLLOW THE TRAIL

Ride the right trail through the maze, pardners, to collect the cowboy's outfit as you go. But be mighty careful not to arrive at anything else! Or it'll be your funeral, seeing as how you'll have to head back to the start!

START



FEARSOME FACTS

Public hangings of up to six at a time attracted big crowds at Fort Smith, Arkansas, where the law was delivered sternly by 'Hanging' Judge Parker!

FASCINATING FACTS

The rough, tough Western town of Deadwood, that saw smallpox, fire and flood, attracted all kinds of frontier folk and trouble in its heyday of the Black Hills gold rush. One of its saloons seemed aptly named the Bucket of Blood!



MYSTERIOUS MESSAGE

Can you read the name of this Wild West shoot-out, featured in various Western films. To work out how, look carefully at the mirror and reflect a little!

CARD SHARP

Work out the missing cards. Hand (B) is a clue for hands (C) and (D).

FATAL FACTS

Deadwood also set the grisly scene for luckless, quick-drawing Wild Bill Hickok to be shot in the back of the head while playing poker. His friend, legendary gun-toting Calamity Jane, was to be buried in the town nearly thirty years later.



ANSWERS

UP THE: Mysterious Message: Hold the page up to a mirror or hold it to read in the light of the oval.
CARD SHARP: (A) King of diamonds completes the run: (B) 7 - 2 + 3 = 8; therefore (C) 6 of hearts (6-5+9=10) and (D) 4 of diamonds (10-4+1=7).
DANGEROUS DESPERADOES: JESSE JAMES.
SALOON: GENERAL STORE: HOTEL.
WILD WEST WORDS: WAGON TRAIN: QUICK ON THE DRAW: 10-GALLOON HAT: CATTLE DRIVE: ROUND-UP TIME.
STRANGE SIGNS: HANDMAID: UNDERMINE: JAIL.